

Reinventing Tacitus as a Poet and an Artist: The Evolution of a Critical Perspective

It is well known, ever since ancient literary theory, that poetry and historiography live together with close relationship and continuous 'genre trespassing'. As regards Tacitus, scholars have long acknowledged poetic 'colouring' and artistic touch as constitutive features of 'Tacitus' style and narrative. So, 'Tacitus the artist' and 'Tacitus the poet of history' are two 'labels', two established lines of interpretation in Tacitean studies; but where do they originate? When does such an approach to Tacitus' works begin, in which historical and cultural contexts and, above all, to what extent does it influence the critical assessment on Tacitus as a historian? This contribution aims, as far as possible, to provide answers to these questions, focusing on a broad period that goes from 16th to 20th century.

T.A. Joseph, *Tacitus and Epic*, in V.E. Pagán, ed. by, *A Companion to Tacitus*, Malden-Oxford 2012, 369-385.

E. Löfstedt, *The Style of Tacitus*, in Id., *Roman Literary Portraits*, Oxford 1958, 157-180.

R. Mellor, *Ut pictura poesis: The Visual Representation of History*, in Id., *Tacitus' Annals*, Oxford 2010, 63-77.